

# BFC giving interns close-up look

CLARKSBURG —The Department of Defense's Biometrics Fusion Center (BFC) is providing seven West Virginia University students a close-up look at biometric technologies in several business applications, ranging from knowledge management to equipment test and evaluation.

The students earned their positions by applying through the federal government's Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP).

"We are very proud to give as many biometric engineering students as possible meaningful professional experiences in the use of biometric technologies," said Sam Cava, Biometrics Fusion Center

director. "WVU biometric students show great aptitude in the technology and immediately make a contribution to the overall success of our organization."

The seven BFC-located STEP employees are: Karla Buckel, Grantsville, Md.; James Cann III, Bridgeport; Amie King, Scott Depot; Jeffrey Simon, Dayton, Ohio; Jennifer Smarr, Jane Lew; Logan Stanley, Fairmont; and Scott Starn, Fairmont. An eighth STEP, Sarah Lovell, also a WVU student and a resident of New Martinsville, is working at the Biometrics Management Office, Arlington, Va.

Cann, King and Simon

earned a repeat tour at the BFC through the STEP.

"The BFC provides a great opportunity to learn how biometrics are used. I have experienced the emergence and importance of implementing biometric identification in a post-9/11 world, which has propelled its use from a rarity to an essential tool," Cann said on his service at the BFC.

"Biometrics technologies are presenting new graduates with opportunities to make a difference in the world. This relatively young technology gives professionals the chance to make meaningful contributions to the security of our country. Since 2003, when I worked my first stint as a STEP at the

BFC, the progress of biometric applications has just been phenomenal," King said.

"Biometrics is an exciting growth technology that offers professionals opportunities to impact the way we live just as desktop computing did in the 1990s," Simon said. "This internship will allow me to use the skills I learned at WVU in the real world. It is also fun working on the latest technology in biometrics."

The Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) was designed to introduce talented students to the advantages and challenges of working for the Federal Government; to provide opportunities for students to combine

academic study with on-the-job work experience; and to provide opportunities for students to earn money while continuing their education. This program includes positions in all occupational groups (professional, administrative, technical, clerical) within the service.

The Biometrics Fusion Center anchors the southern part of West Virginia's biometrics technology corridor, and West Virginia University caps it at the north. Biometric technologies are in use on the US-VISIT (United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology) program that assists in securing the nation's borders, as a method of pay-

ment in several grocery store chains, and for employees to enter places of employment.

Biometrics technology uses a person's physical characteristics for identification and authentication of that person to allow access to facilities, to information stored on computing devices, and to identify that a person is who he says he is at any point in time. The five most prevalent types of biometrics are fingerprint, iris pattern, facial features, hand shape and voice pattern. Biometric-enabled identification systems are in use by schools, hospitals, manufacturers, and the entertainment industry, as well as by U.S. government agencies.